

## **Bigfork Fire District Trustee**

**February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

**Trustees: Dan Elwell, Robert Borges, Gary Wilson, Seth Price, Andrew Sliter**

**Guests: Chief-Mark Thiry, Jeremy Patton, Tracey Gembala, Tom Pauley**

1. **Call Meeting to Order/Pledge of Allegiance:** 17:31
2. **General Public Comment:** None
3. **Review/Approval of meeting minutes January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020:** Clarification on Agenda- January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020 not the 25<sup>th</sup>.  
A motion was made to approve January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020 meeting minutes. Wilson (1<sup>st</sup>), Borges (2<sup>nd</sup>) all in favor, none opposed.
4. **Review/Approval of Purchase Orders:** Chief Thiry explained to the Board that the fire department received a donation that was directed towards the purchase of ballistic vests. Thiry also requested that another donation from the Bigfork Lady's Service Club be used towards the purchase of ballistic helmets.  
A motion was made to approve PO #7953 for Ballistic Vest  
Price (1<sup>st</sup>), Borges (2<sup>nd</sup>) all in favor, none opposed. A motion was made to approve PO #7954 for Ballistic Helmets. Borges (1<sup>st</sup>), Wilson (2<sup>nd</sup>) all in favor, none opposed.
5. **Review/Approval of Reconciliation of Financial Statements and Bills Paid:** No Comment. A motion was made to approve Reconciliation of Financial Statements and Bills Paid as presented. Borges (1<sup>st</sup>), Wilson (2<sup>nd</sup>) all in favor, none opposed
6. **PCR Report-Norred.**  
As noted in the first page of financials. At end of January there was a total of 61 calls, 37 were billable, 21 were not able to bill out due to the incomplete and reviews. As of today, still have one report from January not reviewed so unable to close out the month. 4 reports pass the 24hrs as of today, total for month of February so far has been 10, it has been a great improvement from last month. \*  
See attached reports printed out for the Board to review. Chief Thiry explained the outstanding reports and agreed that there has been a great improvement with the status of reports. Elwell suggested to have another update at the next meeting and if things were still going well, there would be no need for Board involvement any longer.

7. **Fire Chief Report\*** See attached Report
8. **Apparatus Committee Report:** Chief Thiry informed the Board that preliminary drawings have been received. We are waiting for a final set of drawings for approval. Elwell suggested having a decal with reference to Doug Smith on the exterior of the ambulance and then inviting the media to be there when it is revealed to Doug.
9. **Land & building Committee Report:** Borges spoke with Sands Surveying. Sands thinks there is a very high probability that the survey can be done as an AG exemption survey. They would try to avoid doing a subdivision survey. Price recommends having a contract stating all purchase and terms are subject to the survey and county approval. Elwell directed Borges to contact Sands tomorrow and tell them that we need to make sure that the property will be tax exempt and we will be able to build a fire hall on the property.
10. **Convene into closed session pursuant to MCA 2-3-203 (3):** 18:04 went to Close Session
11. **Reconvene back into open session:** 18:29 back to open session.
12. **Old Business**
  - A. **Land purchase for new station:**

A motion was made to approve Sands Surveying to move forward with the surveying. Borges (1<sup>st</sup>), Wilson (2<sup>nd</sup>) all in favor, none opposed.
  - B. **Revise Policy 225.00.1 (f) Vacation on Holidays 2<sup>nd</sup>Reading:**

2<sup>nd</sup> Reading for Policy—no changes
  - C. **Revise Policy 225.01.2 (b) Sick leave on Holiday 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading for Policy—no changes
  - D. **Revise Wildland Policy 105.04.2 (b)(iv), (c)(vi) Amend language regarding normal work hours. 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading for Policy—no changes
  - E. **Echo Lake Station Property Clearing of Trees:** Tabled for future discussion.

Chief will be speaking with DNRC later this weekend and will try to have an answer about holding a sawyer class. A motion was made to table for future discussion: Borges (1<sup>st</sup>), Price (2<sup>nd</sup>) all in favor, none opposed.
  - F. **Ralph Barton Scholarship Fund:** Cindy had talked to Dave Barton and he said he would try to come up with some guidelines.

- G. **Building Security-Bigfork Hall, Echo Lake Tower issues etc.:** A motion was made to table this until next month. Borges (1<sup>st</sup>), Price (2<sup>nd</sup>) all in favor, none opposed.
- H. **Review Bigfork Fire District Trustees By-Laws-Note any changes:** Wilson stated that Article IV needs to be changed to reflect the actual meeting date and time. It currently states Wednesdays and needs to be changed to the last Tuesday of the month. Elwell suggested just to update the by-laws and not go through the 3 readings. Sliter suggested to go through the 3 readings not just to find what is incorrect, but also anything that may be missing from them. The Board agreed. A motion was made to change the meeting date to the last Tuesday of the month. Wilson (1<sup>st</sup>), Borges (2<sup>nd</sup>) all in favor, none opposed

### 13. New Business

- A. **Purchase of 2 laptops for Ambulance:** Patton explained the current patient care reports and signature sheets and suggested that laptops on the ambulances would streamline the process and would use a fraction of the paper. Patton also explained that this was not a necessity but would help the crews by simplifying the process and give them the ability to work on the report while returning from the hospital. Sliter suggested purchasing one laptop initially to see if it is helpful. Patton agreed that this was good idea. A motion was made to place a limit of \$2,000 to purchase 2 laptops, 1 initially with the ability to purchase a second one if needed. Borges (1<sup>st</sup>), Price (2<sup>nd</sup>) all in favor, none opposed.
- B. **S.A Resignation:** Chief Thiry explained that Seth was going to Arizona to get his paramedic license and planned on returning in the future. A motion was made to accept Seth Anderson's letter of resignation, Borges (1<sup>st</sup>), Sliter (2<sup>nd</sup>) all in favor, none opposed.
- C. **Volunteer vs. Paid Status Discussion:** Borges is requesting that the department pay an hourly wage for the current volunteers. He stated that there are only 2 volunteers that regularly show up for calls and training out of the 6 on the roster. Borges gave several reasons why volunteerism is down nationwide as well as in the Bigfork Fire district, including demographics, cost of living etc. He also stated that it is not fair for the volunteers to work side by side with an employee who is being paid an hourly wage. Elwell disagreed and stated that all the surrounding fire districts are volunteer, and our building says volunteer on it. Elwell said that there were 14 volunteers on the department when he joined 7 years ago and would like

to try recruiting again. He also asked about starting a cadet program. Borges pointed out that there is not enough staffing to run a cadet program properly.

Tom Pauley gave some information from previous departments that he had been on and confirmed that they have all had to transition to paid staffing because there were not enough volunteers to provide adequate service.



Sliter stated that the Board had previously given the Chief direction to move forward as a paid department.

The Board decided to end the discussion, and have it placed on the agenda as an action item in the future if desired.

**14. Motion to Adjourn:** Wilson (1<sup>st</sup>), Price (2<sup>nd</sup>) all in favor, none opposed.

Meeting adjourned: 19:29

Minutes Approved:

 3-31-20, Chairman-Dan Elwell  
, Recorder-Jeremy Patton